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## Wisconsin receives \$30.2 million federal charter school grant

MADISON — Wisconsin is among five states sharing \$82 million in federal competitive charter school funding grants announced today by the U.S. Department of Education.

The state's \$30.2 million, two-year award will fund grants for charter school planning, first- and second-year start-up costs, and dissemination activities to share best practices in developing and operating charter schools. Arizona, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Tennessee also received federal grants.

"Charter schools promote innovative solutions in education that serve local needs," said State Superintendent Tony Evers. "This funding supports our efforts to establish and maintain high-quality charter schools that explore new models for increasing student academic achievement."

Wisconsin was among the first states in the nation to allow school districts to establish charter schools. In 1993, Wisconsin enacted legislation allowing school districts to open 10 charter schools across the state, with a limit of two schools in a district. Today, because of changes to that legislation, school districts can authorize an unlimited number of charter schools. In addition, the City of Milwaukee, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee Area Technical College, and the University of Wisconsin-Parkside also may authorize charter schools.

Charter schools are public schools that are accountable to their authorizing agency for performance measures included in the charter contract. Charter schools must employ licensed teachers, involve parents, administer statewide tests, and comply with federal regulations that govern all public schools. The Department of Public Instruction estimates there will be 212 charter schools in Wisconsin for the 2009-10 school year.

When Evers was the administrator in Cooperative Educational Service Agency 6, he worked with a consortium of school districts to open one of the state's earliest charter schools.

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**NOTES:** A high-resolution photo of the state superintendent is available on the Department of Public Instruction "Media Contacts and Resources" webpage at <http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/vm-media.html>. Additional information about charter schools in Wisconsin is available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/csindex.html>.